



March 24, 2019

OUR PEOPLE, OUR PROBLEM, OUR SOLUTION

Patricia Brown Holmes
Managing Partner
Riley Safer Holmes & Cancila LLP
70 W. Madison Street
Suite 2900
Chicago, IL 60602

Dear Ms. Brown-Holmes

My name is Phill Wilson. I am the founder of the Black AIDS Institute (BAI). Founded in 1999, BAI is the only national HIV/AIDS think tank in the U.S. focused exclusively on Black people. With chapters in 20 cities—including Chicago—BAI's mission is to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Black communities by engaging and mobilizing leaders, institutions, and individuals in efforts to confront HIV/AIDS in local communities. BAI disseminates information, offers training and capacity building, makes recommendations on both private and public HIV/AIDS policy, provides comprehensive primary community based clinical care in Los Angeles, and conducts mobilization and advocacy.

I am writing this letter on behalf of Jussie Smollett. I met Jussie when he was 15 years. In the two decades that I've known him, he has always conducted himself with honesty, integrity, and basic decency. Long before he was on *Empire*, before the fame, and before anyone in the public cared what he thought, said, or did, Jussie volunteered his talent and time to helping people, raising awareness and money to fight HIV/AIDS in the U.S. and South Africa. Once his career started to take off, Jussie expanded his activism and charity work to include dozens of non-profit causes. Jussie has been a tireless champion on behalf of LGBTQ people, Black people, immigrants, victims of gun violence, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and many others. He is currently an active member of the board of directors of the Black AIDS Institute, where he helps the organization with governance, development, and community awareness.

I've worked with countless numbers of celebrities, elected officials and others over the years. I have never worked with anyone who was more willing than Jussie to lend his talent, time, and money to help other people. Jussie doesn't just lend his name. He volunteers his time and pays for his own travel expenses associated with the work he does for the Black AIDS Institute. Small not for profit organizations require supporters to play multiple roles. With one recent fundraiser, Jussie not only served as the event chair. He was the host of the event and lead photographer. At the end of the evening he made a major donation to make sure the organization reached its goal.

I hope this provides you with some insights into the person I know Jussie Smollett to be. Should you need any other information that I might be privy to, I can be reached at Phylltracy@aol.com or via cell at (323) 829-4195.

Sincerely

Phill Wilson

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